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ABSTRACT

A policy statement of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) concerning public policy for 1988 is presented. At the federal level, AASCU's public policy agenda encompasses three themes: access and opportunity; teaching, research, service, and professional development; and international understanding. At the state level, AASCU institutions are concerned about financial resources, program opportunities, and governance. Specific concerns are as follows: increased funding for federal student assistance programs, with Pell grants funded at a $2,500 maximum grant level; restoration of the balance between federal grant and loan resources; funding to help states and colleges to improve the preparation of teachers and to expand teaching opportunities, particularly for minority students; funding to encourage school systems and higher education to solve problems of program articulation and teacher preparation; increased funding for foreign language and area studies under Title VI of the Higher Education Act; support for low levels of tuition at public colleges; support for access to continuing education programs in all regions; and promotion of institutional and system autonomy. (SW)

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1988 Public Policy Agenda

The following policy statement was presented by AASCU's Council of State Representatives and adopted by the association's membership at its 27th Annual Meeting in November 1987.

The institutions that make up the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) will be directly affected by public policy decisions made in 1988. These institutions are a vital force in American higher education. They educate over 2.5 million students annually, about one-fifth of the total higher education population. One-third of our nation's bachelor's degrees, 27 percent of its master's degrees, and 5 percent of all doctorates are awarded each year by these institutions. Historically, more than 60 percent of America's teachers have been prepared in AASCU institutions. The education provided at these schools shapes our nation's future.

As the association that represents their interests, AASCU is involved in the process that determines policies and practices affecting higher education at the federal, state, and local levels. As 1988 approaches, AASCU urges the second session of the 100th Congress and every state government to pursue policies that will enable public colleges and universities to meet successfully the educational challenges engendered by a global economy based on information and technology. Furthermore, AASCU encourages local levels of government and parents to continue supporting efforts that bring higher education within the reach of all citizens who are qualified and interested.

At the federal level, AASCU's public policy agenda encompasses three major themes: access and opportunity; teaching, research, service, and professional development; and international understanding. Legislative action is necessary in these areas if we as a nation are to maintain and strengthen our competitive position and fully develop our work force. To do this we need to maximize the educational potential of all of our citizens; we need to enhance the capacity of higher education institutions to teach, train, conduct re-

search, and perform public service; and we need to develop skills and understanding that enable us to live successfully in an ever-changing world and market place.

At the state level, AASCU institutions are cognizant of their responsibility to maintain appropriate and high standards of accountability for public resources and the outcomes of their programs. This commitment forms the basis of assurance that the public interest is being served to the best of an institution's ability. Unwarranted intrusion by state authority and external interests impinges upon the basic principle of institutional and system autonomy and threatens the effort to achieve high-quality educational results.

In 1988, AASCU will continue its ongoing efforts in the fields of science and technology, telecommunications, urban and rural affairs, health affairs, community development, and taxation. These efforts enhance the teaching, training, research, and public-service capabilities of our institutions. However, in 1988, our priority attention will be in the following areas:

Federal Level

Access and Opportunity

- increased funding for federal student assistance programs, with Pell grants funded at a $2,500 maximum grant level;

- restoration of the balance between federal grant and loan resources to diminish the excessively burdensome development of post-graduation debt;

- extension of financial aid on a full-parity basis to part-time and adult students;

- parity of aid to part-time students in the Pell Grant program;

- increased funding for developing institutions through Title III of the Higher Education Act;

- support to strengthen the teaching, research, and service capabilities of public colleges and universities educating substantial numbers of minority students and non-native speakers of English;

- increased support for our nation's historically black public colleges and universities;

- adoption of federal tax policies that do not create barriers to students' educational opportunities.

Teaching, Research, Service, and Professional Development

- funding to expand the capacity of states and institutions to improve the preparation of teachers, to encourage and expand teaching opportunities, particularly for minority students, and to enhance the status of teaching as a profession;

- assistance to enhance teaching and learning effectiveness;

- support for encouraging cooperation and collaboration between school systems and higher education in solving problems of program articulation and teacher preparation;

- assistance for facilities construction and renovation, and for new instrumentation and equipment;

- adoption and implementation of federal legislation to assist emerging research institutions and to upgrade undergraduate science and engineering instructional facilities;

- expansion of programs that encourage students to pursue public-service careers;

- enhancement of the capacity of institutions to conduct economic development and community service through applied research.

International Understanding

- increased funding for foreign language and area studies under Title VI of the Higher Education Act;
- legislation to establish a national structure to address issues related to improving international education;
- legislation to authorize a long-term student exchange program to bring increased numbers of international students, particularly from developing countries, to the United States and to provide American students with expanded opportunities abroad;
- increased support for programs encouraging the interchange of faculty.

State Level

Financial Resources

- support for low levels of tuition at public colleges and universities to remove financial barriers that prevent access to high-quality public higher education;
- expansion of state student aid programs for economically and culturally disadvantaged students;
- advocacy for state appropriations to guarantee that high-quality education will be provided to all who seek it; to attract and maintain highly qualified faculty members; to maintain up-to-date equipment inventories; to develop and utilize modern instructional technology; and to ensure that standards for maintaining academic quality are met.

Program Opportunities

- encouragement of regional and local economic development through the support of partnership programs involving state colleges and

universities, state and local governments, and business and industry;

- support for access to continuing education programs in all regions of the states;

- support for institutional and community development of public-service activities for college students.

Governance

- education of the various constituencies of public higher education on the vital importance of institutional and system autonomy and the relationship of such autonomy to the development of high-quality public higher education.

Finally, AASCU believes local levels of government, parents, and the citizenry at large have a crucial role to play in support of higher education and in encouraging all who may benefit to participate in higher education. With respect to local governments, AASCU urges these jurisdictions to continue policies at the community level that support higher education. With respect to parents, AASCU will continue efforts to educate families of future students of the need to begin planning early to meet future college costs and to assist their children to prepare themselves while in elementary and secondary school for success in college. In addition, AASCU will support public policies that facilitate family investment and planning for financing higher education.

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